



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor – Michael S. Steele, Lt. Governor – S. Anthony McCann, Secretary

Community Health Administration

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Public Health Advisory- Please post and distribute

Date: September 9, 2005

To: Hospital Administrators

CC: Community Health Centers
Infection Control Professionals
Hospital Health Care Providers
Local Health Officers
Med Chi
FRED
Physician and Nursing Boards

From: DHMH Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response

Re: Evacuees relocating to Maryland

Statement of Fact:

Evacuees from the Katrina effected gulf area have relocated to Maryland and may present to healthcare facilities for evaluation and treatment of acute and chronic medical problems. DHMH has identified several medical issues related to evacuees including exposure to infectious diseases, unknown or unverified vaccination status and financial issues related to health care costs.

Recommendations:

Please refer to the following references and distribute this advisory widely within your staff.

1. Infectious Diseases

- a. Evacuees may be at risk for infectious diseases related to crowded conditions with poor sanitation and hygiene in shelters in addition to exposure to contaminated water and food in their evacuated areas. Reported infectious diseases include respiratory and gastrointestinal illnesses as well as TB.
- b. Several cases of *Vibrio vulnificus* infections in residents in the affected areas have been reported. Additional information can be found at:
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/vibriovulnificus.asp>.
- c. Leptospirosis has been reported following flood events and may occur in evacuees and responders. Information about leptospirosis can be found at:
www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/katrina/leptofaqs.asp
- d. Please notify your local health department if the evacuees present with any reportable illness under Maryland regulations. <http://www.edcp.org/html/reprtabl.html>.

- e. Additional updates about infectious disease issues associated with the hurricane can be obtained at: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/infectiousdisease.asp>.
 - f. Fact sheets for patients can be found at: <http://www.edcp.org/html/cdindex.html> and CDC.
- 2. Immunizations**
- a. The following CDC Web site contains recommendations for immunizations of evacuees. <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/katrina/vaccrecdisplaced.asp>.
 - b. If you have additional questions concerning immunizations contact your local health department.
- 3. Mental Health**
- a. Evacuees have experienced traumatic episodes of various degrees and intensity, which could have significant short and long-term mental health effects and consequences.
 - b. The **Maryland Crisis Hotline** is available 24/7 for those individuals in need of crisis counseling. That number is **1-800-422-0009**.
 - c. Additional information concerning mental health issues can be obtained at: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/>.
 - d. If you have additional questions concerning mental health issues please contact your local health departments.
- 4. Medical Assistance (MA) And Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP)**
- a. Qualifications for evacuees and victims from the affected areas have been modified to permit expedited registration and enrollment.
 - b. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services has eased health care access for Katrina evacuees: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/media/press/release.asp?Counter=1551>.
 - c. If you have any questions contact the director of your local Department of Social Services or case managers at your Local Health Department.
- 5. Provision of Care**
- a. DHMH has received several inquiries from healthcare facilities and providers offering to provide medical services and care for evacuees from the devastated areas.
 - b. Those health care providers and organizations interested in providing healthcare services for evacuees from the affected areas should contact their local health departments.

Further Resources:

- 1- Please visit the DHMH web site for ongoing information from DHMH concerning Katrina related issues and information: http://www.dhmf.state.md.us/html/hottopics_katrina.htm.
- 2- Please visit the CDC web Site at: <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes/index.asp> for additional health related issues and information related to hurricane Katrina.
- 3- The HHS web site contains several links to Katrina related web pages: <http://www.hhs.gov/katrina/>.